

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 02244 301532Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----301536Z 054922 /53

O R 301443Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5492  
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
USMISSION USUN NY

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 2244

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE, IS, SY  
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION

REFS: (A) STATE 62008, (B) TEL AVIV 1976, (C) TEL AVIV  
2089

1. I MET WITH EVRON THIS MORNING TO RECEIVE THE GOI  
ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON  
(REFTEL A). MOSHE RAVIV WAS ALSO PRESENT. EVRON  
DREW UPON A PAPER, TRANSLATING INFORMALLY FROM THE  
HEBREW AS HE READ, AND THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF  
HIS PRESENTATION:

2. BEGIN TEXT: ISRAEL HAS NO TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS OR  
CLAIMS IN LEBANON. AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED, A  
PEACE TREATY BETWEEN LEBANON AND ISRAEL CAN BE  
NEGOTIATED AND SIGNED FORTHWITH.

3. ISRAEL WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN INDEPENDENT AND  
PROSPEROUS LEBANON, AS IT WAS IN THE PAST. WE ARE  
CONCERNED OVER SYRIA'S TAKEOVER OF LEBANON AND  
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PARTICULARLY OVER THE SYRIAN OBJECTIVE OF TURNING  
LEBANON INTO A CONFRONTATION STATE WITH ISRAEL.

4. ISRAEL OPPOSE ANY UNILATERAL STEPS BY SYRIAN OR  
ANY OTHER INTER-ARAB FORCE UNITS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON,  
AS HAPPENED IN NABATIYA.

5. ISRAEL BELIEVES THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON SHOULD REST WITH LEBANESE FORCES.

6. AS AN IMMEDIATE SOLUTION, IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE FOR THIS PURPOSE THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, SOME OF WHOSE PERSONNEL HAVE SERVED OR CONTINUE TO SERVE IN THE LEBANESE FORCES, IF PRESIDENT SARKIS WILL RECOGNIZE THEM AS BEING AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LEBANESE ARMY AND IF THEY RECEIVE THEIR ORDERS FROM HIM.

7. FROM ISRAEL'S POINT OF VIEW, THE FIRST AND TOP PRIORITY SHOULD BE THE PREVENTION OF INFILTRATION OF SYRIAN OR INTER-ARAB FORCES INTO THE AREA OF SOUTHERN LEBANON, EVEN IF THIS WOULD MEAN THAT FOR THE TIME BEING THERE IS NOT COMPLETE CONTROL OVER THE ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATION OF THE TERRORISTS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. THE REASON FOR THIS IS THAT SUCH A MOVE (OF SYRIAN OR INTER-ARAB FORCE) WOULD HAVE LONG-RANGE POLITICAL AND MILITARY CONSEQUENCES.

8. AS A RESULT OF THE LESSON OF THE NABATIYA INCIDENT AND IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY MISUNDERSTANDING IN THE FUTURE, IT MAY BE DESIRABLE TO REACH A FORMAL OR INFORMAL AGREEMENT WITH LEBANON REGARDING A SECURITY ARRANGEMENT IN SOUTHERN LEBANON THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE UNITED STATES AS WAS DISCUSSED DURING SECRETARY VANCE'S RECENT VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

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9. WE REPEAT OUR REQUEST THAT THE U.S. PRESS FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SYRIAN FORCES BACK TO THE POSITIONS THAT THEY HAD BEFORE JANUARY 27, NORTH OF AL AYSHIYAH. END TEXT.

10. IN ANSWER TO MY QUERY, EVRON SAID THAT THIS STATEMENT OF ISRAEL'S POSITION HAD BEEN CLEARED AT A HIGH LEVEL. I NOTED THAT IT DID NOT FULLY ADDRESS THE QUESTIONS I PUT TO HIM AT OUR MARCH 21 MEETING (REFTEL B). HE REPLIED THAT ISRAEL COULD NOT ANSWER SOME OF THEM, CITING AS AN EXAMPLE THE QUESTION ON THE LENGTH OF TIME REQUIRED FOR THE MARONITE MILITIA TO ESTABLISH A STABILIZED MILITARY ZONE ALONG THE ISRAELI BORDER.

11. COMMENT: THIS IS PROBABLY THE BEST WE ARE GOING TO GET IN THE NATURE OF A REPLY - AT LEAST AN OFFICIAL

ONE. THE INFERENCE WAS FAIRLY CLEAR THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN QUESTIONS IN REGARD TO LEBANON WHICH THE GOI DOES NOT WISH TO HAVE TO ANSWER TO US, HENCE THE LACK OF SPECIFICITY. WE ARE LIKELY, HOWEVER, TO HEAR MORE ABOUT THE POINTS IN PARAS 8 AND 9, WITH PRIORITY PROBABLY BEING GIVEN TO THE LATTER (SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL NORTH OF AL AYSHIYAH) SINCE THIS IS AN IMMEDIATE POINT OF INTEREST TO THE IDF.  
DUNNIGAN

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## Message Attributes

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